BIBLE805

# The Good News of Salvation in Jesus

Why you need it
and how to make it yours

YVON PREHN

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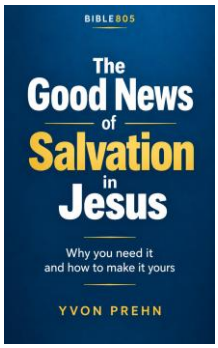
***why you need it and how to make it yours***

**Yvon Prehn**

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**The Good News of Salvation in Jesus, why you need it, how to make it yours**

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For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him
will not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16, NLT

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not
from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.
For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,
which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:8-10, NIV

Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.

Psalm 23:6

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# We need good news

In recent years, pandemics, crazy weather, racial injustice, and political turmoil—wherever we turn, bad news fills our world, makes our heads ache, and hurts our hearts.

But there is one place the news is good—and that's in the good news about salvation in Jesus.

Many call this good news the gospel.

This gospel, also referred to as "getting saved," is sometimes presented as a quick fix solution to whatever problems you might have, a divine get-rich-quick scheme, or a heavenly hope for an unbearable life.

Is that what it is? Is it more, or less? And how did it all come about?

This short book will answer those questions. It will help us look more closely at what the gospel, the good news about salvation in Jesus, is really all about.

"Good news" is the dictionary definition of the word "gospel."

The next logical question of course is: "Good news about what?"

The good news is that God, after creating a perfect world for humanity, giving them everything they needed and a relation-ship where they were literally made for each other, then watching them throw it all away because of their disobedience, didn't sit up in heaven, watching humanity make a mess of their lives and world and do nothing.

He did something about it with extraordinarily important im-plications for people both now and for eternity. John 3:16 summarizes it in this way *"God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."*

That's the good news of the gospel in one verse, but that summary has quite a lot behind it and to explore this good news in more detail, let's look at why we need God's good news and how to respond to it.

## Without God, making a mess of our lives is pretty much what we do

It doesn't take unique insight to know our world is a mess right now. We can talk for hours about the crazy stuff other people, particularly those on the opposite political side, are doing that is reprehensible or stupid in our opinion. But, for a few minutes, let's look away from the world and other people.

Let's look at ourselves.

We might look OK on the outside, we may have escaped some of the worst life mistakes and missteps but inside, in our quiet

moments, when we're alone, we suspect we're missing out on something we can't define, that we don't measure up, that something is wrong.

Underlying it all, I believe we have this ache inside because we know—

## This world and all the chaos in it will someday end, but we won't

Inside, in our heart of hearts, I believe we know we were created to live forever.

Also, I think we know there is a place where all dreams can come true, where we will find forever, perfect love, where we will live out the purpose we were created for.

Somehow, I think we also know we can't ever get there on our own.

But we try—we try to build heaven on this earth with money and stuff and toys—but the toys grow old, and the dreams sometimes turn into nightmares.

We try to make ourselves look perfect, thinking that will help us achieve a perfect relationship, but satisfying romantic rela-tionships or friendships, let alone perfect ones, are hard to find no matter how good we think we look or how fascinating we've worked to become.

We also know at the end of this life, if we face death without God, eternity is frightening.

## What do we do then?

We might try to reach up to God, but just being a good person

and trying to do all the right things never feels like enough. Simply being nice sometimes and feeling proud of ourselves when we avoid big sins always feels like it falls short—because it does.

The problem is that we can't ever do enough good because the problem isn't primarily with what we do on the outside.

*The big problem is inside us—it's our inner core that wants our way and not God's.*

## That is the core definition of sin

Sin at its core is wanting our way instead of God's way. It's saying no to God and yes to me.

Adam and Eve did that in a perfect paradise and we keep doing it.

Every sin, from a selfish lie to save our reputation, to theft or murder to get what we want, to a relationship we know isn't right—all results from doing it my way and not God's.

No matter how hard we try to do better, the problem is we were born with this desire to go our way, and as we grow, we get constant messages of "do your own thing," "be the master of your destiny," and similar platitudes that reinforce our self-sh innate desires.

The sayings sound great but following them has gotten us individuals and our world into all kinds of messes.

## What does sin really mean?

We often limit the idea of sin to things like lies, murder, cheating on your partner, and though those actions do qualify as sins, they come from the same heart in all of us that thinks we

know better than our Creator what is best for us and so we do what we want to do.

Again, that going our way (blatant moral failure or not) is what defines sin, and we can't make this

bent towards sin inside go away on our own. Most of us can barely avoid chocolate for 24 hours or exercise regularly, or any other resolution we make, let alone stop sinning.

It gets even worse because God takes sin, this attitude of preferring our way over God's way and living without Him, very personally. God does not force his presence or His will on people. If we want to go our way, God allows us to do that. What many people don't realize or want to think about is that this going our way not only separates people from God in this life, but if left unchecked, it will for all eternity.

## The consequences of going our own way

There is one part of the gospel story that is very hard to understand, and I can't pretend to explain why, but God tells us that sin, that this deciding to go our way isn't something He will ignore forever.

When we've lived for ourselves, only doing what we want, pay-ing no attention to him, when we die, and face Him, He can't say, "Oh, it's all right. . . I know you had a hard time on earth, or a dysfunctional family, or whatever other excuses we might use, let's just forget all the years you ignored me, and how I wanted you to live—welcome to heaven anyway."

He isn't going to do that.

When you think about it, it only makes sense.

If you have actively ignored someone who said they loved you, did things you knew they didn't want you to do, turned your back on them, perhaps even mocked them, like we do with God, would you expect them to welcome you into their home, if you had nowhere else to go?

Of course not—we wouldn't want a person who hated us around for an hour, let alone eternity.

## It's equally self-deceived

For people to think they can live however they want, with no recognition of God as God and expect when they die to be welcomed into heaven, which is His home.

Sometimes I wish God wasn't like that, but He is.

Our turning away from God, even if our lives don't include substantial moral failures, has consequences.

When people say all during their earthly life as they ignore God, “My will be done.”

God will eventually say, “OK, for all eternity, you don’t have to have anything to do with me.”

The consequences are grim: on earth, a life never genuinely fulfilling, though it may be filled with lots of stuff. Unsatisfied longings, fears, and frustrations.

And then you die.

That isn’t a joke or a punch line, but a reality facing us all. The pandemic of a few years back and the current, similar medical tragedies that rage around the world with the sudden death they bring, brought the hovering nearness of death at any age or situation much closer to our consciousness than is comfortable.

But comfortable or not, death is a certainty we all face, perhaps sooner if we catch a life-threatening virus, unexpectedly in an accident or heart attack, or quietly years from now as we quietly close our eyes surrounded by loving families.

Sooner or later, death will come.

The Bible describes existence after death without God as a place of never-ending regret and suffering. It’s not a party with the other guys who raised hell together in life. In the real hell, you are utterly alone with regrets that can never be resolved.

# Here is where the good news starts

In our situation, where we can't do anything to save ourselves, where the future looks bleak without God, the good news in the Bible says that God loves us and didn't abandon humanity when we turned our backs on Him.

Immediately after Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden and went their way from God, God first stated their punishment, and then immediately said that He would pro-vide a Savior to bear that punishment.

**The Bible is all about the fulfillment of that promise**

It sometimes seems (from a human perspective) that God takes an awfully long time to work things out, and the good news of the gospel is one of those things.

The story of that outworking is the story of the Christian Bible.

The Old Testament is about looking forward to the day that Jesus would come, and the preparation for it through the nation of Israel.

The Old Testament taught humanity what God requires and tells the story of what happens when God's people don't follow his commands.

Through all the failures and trials in the Old Testament, God did not abandon His people. He sent prophets to warn and encourage them and remind them of the coming Savior.

The New Testament tells the story of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and the start of the Christian church.

To see the big picture of it all, it is important to read the entire Bible, not just pieces here and there

because reading verses out of context, which is what most people do, will give you a distorted picture of the Christian faith.

Forgive me for a short digression here, feel free to skip to the next header if you want, but I want to tell you about how the Bible805 ministry has two very practical ways for you to start and read through the Bible. The purpose of the entire Bible805 ministry is to help you know, trust, apply, and teach the Bible.

To do that, following are two specific resources to help you get the Bible into your life.

**The first way is through the reading plan and the book, *Start Here! a plan for curious people to begin reading the Bible.***

This book is a selection of New Testament readings starting with the book of Matthew that goes through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, then the founding of the Christian church and finally training on how Christians ought to live.

It was created with the goal of helping someone who knows little to nothing about the Christian faith, meets Jesus and the church He left behind to represent Him—but has no idea the backstory of Jesus, all of the Old Testament prophecies about Him, how He lived the life and died the death He did and why His resurrection brings us salvation. Then having accepted the free gift of salvation, what to do next, and how to live as a Christian.

These are the questions the early readers of the New Testament would have had and they are the same ones people have today. The book, *Start Here! a plan for curious people to begin reading the Bible* is a selection of readings from the New Testament (not all the books, but a selection of complete books) that will give the new believer or someone curious about the Christian faith a comprehensive view of it.

In addition to the reading schedule, the book has overviews of the books in the reading plan, suggestions on what translation or Bible helps to use, and finally advice on how to journal about what you read and in the case of some of the editions, journal pages in the book.

It is an invaluable resource for your church or ministry to give to new believers or those exploring the Christian faith.

A copy of the reading schedule from ***Start Here!*** is included in this book, and the overall book, with journal pages for you to record your thoughts as you read, is available as a free PDF on

www.bible805academy.com/ in print version on amazon.com and links to various digital versions of it are on http://www.bible805.com/

**The second way to really understand the entire story of salvation and God's incredibly intricate way of working it out in human history is to read all the Bible in chronological order.**

Reading in chronological order means to read the Bible in the order that the events happened.

Our Bibles aren't organized that way; they are organized ac-cording to the type of book, not when what happened or in the order of events and people who lived at the same time. We have no idea what prophet preached when or the historical setting of why God did what He did. We don't and won't understand the teaching of the Old Testament if we don't understand these truths.

On the http://www.bible805.com/ website I've got lots of material that explains why this is and the benefits of reading the Bible in chronological order, which is essential if you want to truly understand it.

In addition on the http://www.bible805.com/ website are schedules, podcasts, videos, and lessons to help you read through the Bible in chronological order. There are also links to lessons on all the books of the Bible to help you understand them better.

It is a huge and challenging task to read through the entire Bible in chronological order, but I promise that when you do that, your view of and understanding of the Christian faith will change radically.

I have found it so incredibly helpful to my Christian life, that it is my primary spiritual discipline, and I do it every year. It has helped me grow in my Christian life and gives me a deep and unshakeable trust in God's Word.

Now, back to what this good news, explained throughout the Bible, means to people personally ...

**God could not ignore that humanity had turned away from Him**

Somehow there are eternal, significant, laws of reality that cannot be violated.

One of them, far beyond my understanding, is that the only thing that could heal the breach between God and the creation that had turned away from Him was the death of a sinless sacrifice.

For that solution to come from humanity was impossible. As we talked about previously, we cannot help but sin.

Only God could live the sinless life the sacrifice required.

To do that, Jesus came to earth and lived the life we could not live and then died the death we could not die.

## Because of the death of Jesus on the cross

The Bible tells us that all the sin of humanity past, present, and future was poured out on Jesus when he died on the cross.

God the Father accepted that sacrifice and affirmed it by Jesus rising from the dead.

The breach was healed.

Though we can't save ourselves, if we accept what Jesus did for us, for our sin, we can be forgiven.

I don't understand why Jesus' death is what it took for our salvation and why it is a free gift to us, but that's what the Bible tells us.

## It is hard to understand

How accepting what Jesus did for us can make us right with God doesn't seem to make sense.

Though it is good news, very good news, it is hard to comprehend.

I'm not alone in thinking this—C.S. Lewis also said that to him the gospel does not make human sense and that that was one of the reasons he believed it was from God.

He says humanity would never have come up with a system like that. He said humans want to take credit for everything; we want to be the authors of our salvation.

But it doesn't work that way.

## A summary of the good news

We can't atone for our sins even if we want to.

God required a penalty be paid for sin. The penalty was the death of a sinless sacrifice.

We may not like that calculation of our universe, but we don't make the rules.

And we couldn't pay the price even if that was an option. Jesus, who personally never sinned, was willing to take on the horror of all the sins of humanity, past, present, and future, and to endure them for us.

Think for a moment about a horrible sin, something that makes you sick to even consider. Imagine what it would be like if you were forced to bear the guilt and penalty of that sin multiplied a million times over throughout the history of humanity.

That is what Jesus did for us and in the horror of it, God the Father with whom Jesus had unbroken fellowship from all eternity had to turn away.

## How unfair! You'd respond, and that's true

No one deserves to pay for the sins of someone else. But that is what Jesus did. He took our place on the cross and bore the penalty for our sin. It wasn't fair, but He did it because He loves us.

I don't understand that either.

And not only did He die for our sins, but He entrusted us with his message to share with others and to work with Him to share His love and redemptive purposes for this earth.

Even more, He promises us an eternity with Him where we will truly live in the freedom, joy, and fulfillment we were created for.

***That is good news.***

# The next move is up to us

After the pain and hurt our sins caused Jesus, it's even more amazing that God doesn't force anything on us. He's given humanity free will, freedom to choose or reject this good news.

It is our choice.

There are several options for your response.

**One, you can choose to reject it all**

If so, that is your choice, but I would urge you to keep an open mind, to keep checking out the Christian faith.

Know that Jesus is always there; always waiting; always welcoming if you take the smallest step towards Him.

**Two, you feel you need more information**

That is a great place to be in.

To become a Christian is a solemn commitment. You need to understand what it means and what your obligations and responsibilities will be.

Listen to the podcasts, look at the videos, read the blogs on Bible 805 about it. The ministry of Bible805 has many resources, and there are many other helpful podcasts, websites, and real life churches that can help.

Ask questions; God and His people welcome serious seekers.

The best resource is the Bible. You don't have to believe it comes from God to learn from it. It is a

historically reliable resource about the life of a real historical character, Jesus and the movement He started. Read it in that way, be as skeptical as you wish, but read it.

Start in a book like Matthew (again, the book, *Start Here! a plan for curious people to begin reading the Bible*, is a great resource to help you) to learn more about Jesus.

## Third, if you feel that you understand this message

And that you would like Jesus to become the Forgiver and Leader of your life, you can ask Him to do that**.**

I'll explain how to do that in more detail in a minute, but before you do that, you need to carefully consider what you are doing.

Becoming a Christian is not merely a fire-insurance policy to escape the possibility of hell and then where you go on living your life any way you want. When you ask Jesus to forgive your sins, you are doing business with the Creator of the universe. It is not a step to be taken lightly. The Bible says that He gave His life for you, and if you accept His salvation, He expects you to give your life back to Him.

The Bible describes giving our life back to Jesus as becoming Jesus' disciple and if you honestly want to do that it may require huge changes in your life.

## Becoming Jesus' disciple means you are no longer in charge

That is what it means to truly repent of your sins (remember sin is going your own way).

As a Christian, God is now in control of your life, not you.

You need to talk to your Savior daily in prayer. You need to read the Bible every day to find out how He wants you to live. Our world has gotten so far away from God's expectations, most of us truly have no idea how God wants us to live.

Media and the movies won't tell us—only God's Word (literally *His words*), the Bible, will redo our minds and hearts and will in ways that please Him and show us the truly best way to live.

You need to find a good church where you can become involved with other members of the family

of God and where you can grow in your faith. A good church can be a joy and encouragement, a family for you to grow in your Christian faith.

You will want to get baptized in a church as a sign that you are now a follower of Jesus. Baptism doesn't make you a Christian, it is an illustration of what happened to you when you became a Christian, how you died to your old self and are raised a new person in Jesus.

You will make mistakes, you'll stumble and fall, but when that happens, you can ask forgiveness, get up, and go on.

I certainly want you to accept the good news NOW, however, it is important for you to make an informed decision about your personal salvation.

Charles Spurgeon, the great and inspiring preacher of the 1800s would not allow someone to accept Jesus as their savior after simply being moved by one of his sermons. He did not want this important decision to be based on emotion alone. He would tell them to go home and consider overnight what they were about to do and so in addition to the considerations given above, here are three more.

# What to know before you say "Yes" to Jesus

Consider this your caveat emptor—let the buyer beware before you take the salvation of Jesus for your life.

It's so easy to "get saved" today—emotional appeals are given after baptisms, following a moving sermon, at the end of a podcast or TV talk about God. The benefits are given and it would seem foolish not to respond, especially when it seems like great things will happen at no cost to you.

It all sounds so good. So, you say a prayer and give yourself the label of Christian.

But a few days or months or years go by and your life doesn't change much.

You try church, but then you find out you are supposed to do things nobody told you about up front, like attending regularly, becoming part of a small group, and giving part of your income to the church and those in need.

You try praying, but don't get what you want like you were promised.

I have known so many in that situation, many who responded to a message about salvation given by people with the best of motives, but that was incomplete in what someone needs to know before they make a truly informed decision whether or not to follow Jesus.

Though there may be confusion on many points, following are three of the most frequently misunderstood ones and the reality of what you need to know before you say "yes" to Jesus.

## Misunderstanding #1

### Saying "yes" to Jesus, getting saved, however you label accepting the free gift of salvation, does not mean life will be easy and trouble free

You need to understand that once you become a follower, a disciple of Jesus, your life will not suddenly become easy, wealthy, and trouble-free.

The TV preachers or religious authors who promise this are not telling the truth.

The Bible (which is the only source of truth) tells us that Jesus promised, *"In this world, you will have troubles," (John 16:33)*

Jesus compared becoming His follower to a living death when He said*, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it." (Matthew 16:24-25).*

You can no longer live only for yourself; and retreating from life isn't possible either.

In reality, rather than having all your problems magically solved, you may have more trouble than you've ever had be-cause before choosing Jesus, Satan didn't need to bother with you. Now, you can expect attacks.

Yet along with the attacks (and life hurls plenty at us simply because we live in a fallen world), you have weapons to use against it that you never had before. Ephesians 6:10-18 in the New Testament will give you an overview of them and the Message translation lists them this way*" things like Truth, righ-teousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You'll need them throughout your life. God's Word is an indispensable weapon. In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare."*

You are not promised an easy, rich, problem-free life, but no matter what happens, you are no longer and never will be alone in it. Saying "yes" to Jesus means He will never leave you, the Holy Spirit indwells you, God the Father watches over you, and legions of angels are available to protect you.

What does this mean in practical, day-to-day ways? I have no idea what it might mean for you, but I cannot imagine existing without knowing the Lord is with me, no matter what.

And the Bible does tell some great stories that give us a peek into these spiritual realities. See 2

Kings 6 in the Old Testament, where a very fearful servant of the prophet Elisha was terrified they were about to be killed as an army was positioned to capture them.

Elisha was not afraid. He didn't panic. He simply prayed, "Lord, open his eyes."

And the servant saw "Chariots of fire surrounding them." It doesn't mention the angels driving them, but as every encounter with an angel in the Old Testament opens with "don't be afraid," apparently they were rather terrifying in their strength and power.

The army was not a problem.

Though we may not see chariots of fire protecting us in our trials, we can rely on Jesus' words in the full context of the verse I quoted earlier and know that in the middle of our trials we can have peace.

*"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33, NLT)

And ultimately though life is seldom easy as a Christian, you are now assured that your troubles have a purpose and that some-day they will be over because you are assured of heaven where there will be *"no more pain, tears, or death."* (Revelation 21:4)

## Misunderstanding #2

## You can't just grab the goodie of salvation and then live your life as you want

That would be like getting married and after the ceremony and cake, you grab a share of the presents and dash off to resume the life you lived as a single person.

If you did that, it would be legitimate to question whether you meant your marriage vows when you said them.

Once you are married, you are expected to live with your spouse, for your lives to become one.

That's what Jesus expects and what He wants from you.

He wants to live with you; He wants to hear your voice every day as you talk to Him in prayer about anything and everything.

He wants you to read the Bible, His Words, so you know what He's like and what brings Him joy.

He wants you to get to know and get along with others in His family, His church (more on that in a minute).

To do all those things isn't a legalistic duty, any more than it's a duty for a new bride to want to talk to, spend time with, and love in every way possible, her new husband. Not only is time with Jesus an ever-exciting adventure, but it is also the way to have the most fulfilling and wonderful life.

Only in close relationship, in union with your Creator will you find out and recieve the ability to live into the life you were created for.

Look at the Bible as a love letter, because that is what it really is. It doesn't leave us confused or guessing, worried or afraid, or wondering what life holds next, if we only take enough time in it learning what our God has done for us, is doing for us, and will ultimately do.

No matter how sad, bad, or painful life might be, it won't last forever, as one person said, "when we get to heaven, all the troubles of life will seem like one night in a bad hotel."

## Misunderstanding #3

## You became part of a forever family

Even though you must individually make the decision to accept the gospel message and to follow Jesus as your personal savior, once you do that, you become part of the family of God.

Nowhere in the Bible, has there ever been and there never will be the option of (if you have the choice) of living as a solitary Christian any more than, to continue the analogy of salvation being like a marriage ceremony, if you get married and pretend your spouse does not belong to a family.

You married into a family for better or worse.

This in reality, is one of the best parts of becoming a Christian, because becoming part of the family of God, being part of a community is a reflection of the fundamental reality of our God as a Trinity, an eternal fellowship of love.

Jesus was never alone and He doesn't want followers to be either.

The most obvious contemporary application of your new membership in the community of God is to find a church.

There are many expressions of how people do church and regardless of what anyone says, there is no one, true church. Churches vary in obvious expressions, how they sing, worship, observe the sacraments (baptism and communion, perhaps others), sermons, their liturgy.

These elements are important, but the one you choose is most often based on your background and comfort level far more than any theological analysis.

Whatever church you choose, choose one, and attend regularly.

The corporate worship that takes place in all Christian churches is essential, foundational, and what is due our God as God.

However, to truly learn and grow as a follower of Jesus and to experience the family of faith Jesus intends for you, you need more than attendance on Sunday morning in person or online.

You can attend church every Sunday and remain disconnected from the family of faith. That is not how Jesus wants you to live.

## The more of church that you need, is most often found in small groups

There are many types of small groups, but the type most conducive to growth as a follower of Jesus is one that meets for long enough for the members to truly get to know each other, is founded on God's Word, does life together, and challenges members to live out what they learned.

Other short-term groups in the church on topics or even books of the Bible, that only meet for a short period of time and then are over, have many positive benefits, but you seldom become part of a family of faith in a short-term group.

One of the easiest ways to implement long-term, family formation groups in any church is to have the congregation divided into groups to discuss the content and ways to apply the Sunday sermon. By its very nature, this type of group can be ongoing because here is no need for a leader to come up with content or lessons.

You don't have to buy workbooks or study guides.

Whether the sermon discussion content of the group is a reflection of the variety of Biblical challenges of Protestant churches or systematic focus of the scriptures of the Liturgical year, the topic of the sermon can provides Biblical content to discuss and inspire applications of it.

If the pastor can come up with questions for the groups to discuss or weekly applications that is great.

However many pastors, for many valid reasons, aren't able to do that, and if that is the case, a simple discussion of these questions will provide content for weekly group meetings.

- What stood out to you from this week's sermon?
- What questions do you have about the topic?
- What else does the Bible say about it?
- How are you going to apply what you learned?

Add a prayer time for the group members' concerns and a monthly potluck, continue for 3-6 months or more and you will have created many families of faith, groups where people can grow in their discipleship to Jesus in your church.

If the church you attend doesn't have small groups like this—YOU be the catalyst to start one!

Don't simply go to the pastor and tell him or her that this is what they need to do. You can share your interest, but don't be surprised if they are already overwhelmed with so much to do and can't lead another activity.

You can do this.

Invite a few people over to your home or to a meeting place, bring notes or the bulletin, talk the questions above or simply about how the sermon applies to your life and how to live out the Biblical challenges you heard this week, share prayer requests, and plan time for a meal together. Be there for each other in between meetings.

Commit to do this for for 3-6 months.

Expect challenges and disagreements—work through them.

Keep meeting with your family of God and it will become one of the most treasured parts of your Christian life.

## If you are ready to commit your life to Jesus

After you understand that the good news of salvation is a free gift, and you have a clear

understanding of the costs of following Jesus, then, when you are ready, either out loud, or in your heart, you can pray something like this:

*Dear Jesus,*

*I confess that I am a sinner and that I have chosen to live my life apart from you, to do what I wanted more than anything else. I don't want to do that anymore. I believe that Jesus was God and that He came to earth, died on a cross, and rose from the dead to pay the penalty for my sin, my going my own way. I am now committing my life to you and asking you to be my Forgiver and Leader. Help me to learn to pray, to read your Bible, to find a good church, and to follow through on my commitment to you by publicly acknowledging my decision in baptism. Thank you for loving me and coming into my life. Amen.*

## If you have made that decision, Welcome to the family of God!

The Bible tells us that when someone becomes a Christian, they have passed from death to life and that the angels in heaven are rejoicing.

Just think—right now angels are singing because of you!

To help you get started in your Christian life, please tell a Christian friend, start reading your Bible, and attend a church that will help you grow in your Christian life.

Bible805.com has many resources for you, please help yourself to all of them. They were created to help you come to know Jesus and grow as His disciple.

***As you do these things, and as you learn to be more like Jesus, your life will become a "gospel"—a living message of eternal good news for everyone around you.***

# Appendix

I've tried to explain what it means to be a Christian as clearly as possible, but I know different people respond to the content of information in different ways depending on how it is presented.

My goal and prayer in putting this book together is for you to believe the gospel, the good news and trust Jesus as your Savior and so in addition to the lengthy text presentation in this book and the podcast of it (on the Bible805 Podcast, links to it on www.Bible805.com) I also want to share some infographics the process of what it means to become a Christian.

The infographics are in several formats and are my interpretation of a way to share the gospel that I learned from the Navigators, the Bridge Illustration. You can freely download all three in 8 x 11 format and png formats from the www.Bible805Academy.com.

The three versions are:

- A basic illustration of the plan of Salvation with Bible verses and a text explanation of the illustration on the back.
- An A.I. generated pictorial infographic on the plan of salvation in full color. In this book it is printed in black and white, but you can print the original in color.
- An A.I. generated infographic on the plan of salvation in a more subdued, simple format.

If you would like to share the good news of the gospel with someone, these infographics can be useful. The text explanation after the first illustration can also be printed on the back of the other illustrations.

You have permission to put any of these materials on your church or ministry websites also.

It is amazing to me when I have done surveys of church websites how few have a page or section that tells you how to become a Christian. That is the core, the first thing, the foundation of all we are about.

As someone said, "You don't become a care just by being in a garage and you don't become a Christian simply by going to church." An individual must make a personal decision to do that and here are some tools that may help visitors to do that.

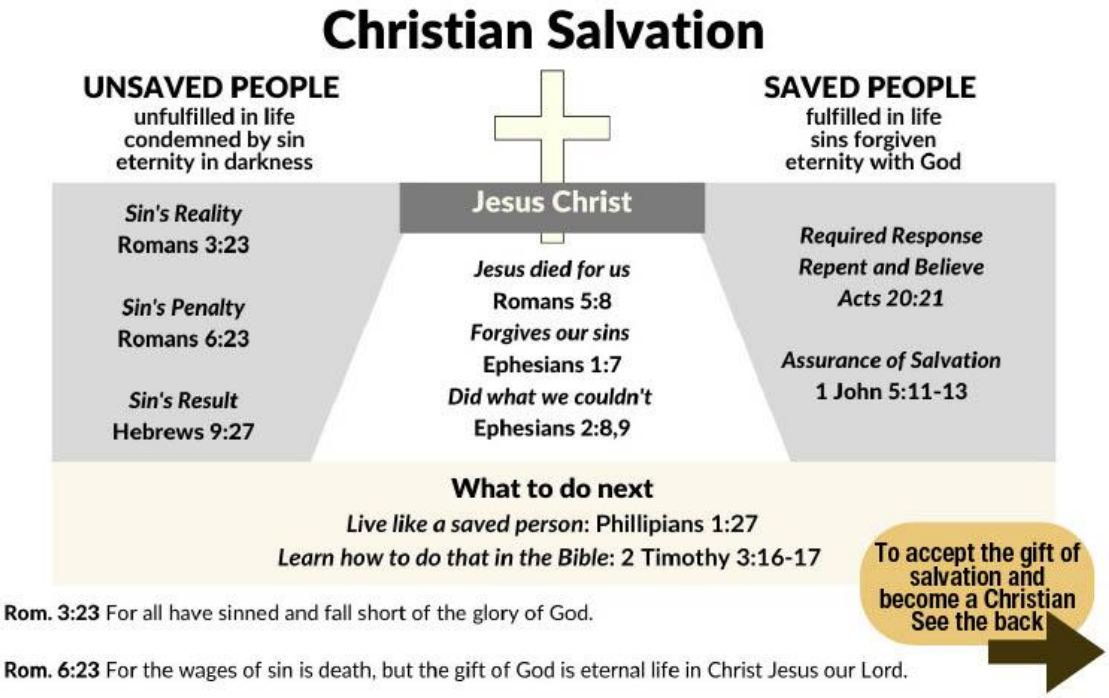
You can use any of these to remedy that or you can use them as inspiration for your pastor or someone else in the church to explain the gospel message.

## Misc. helpful files

- In addition, I've also included the Bible-reading chart from the book, *Start Here, a plan for curious people to begin reading the Bible,* and more information about the book. This book is highly recommended as a resource to get people started reading their Bibles. Have them on hand in your church for explorers about the Christian faith, new believers, long-time Christians who haven't read their Bibles beyond daily devotions.
- Bible805 has many resources for you to help you grow in your Christian life and to know, trust, apply, and teach the Bible. They are listed with links to them in the pages that follow.
- A brief bio of Yvon Prehn
- One last very important question

# Plan of Salvation infographic & text explanation

A basic illustration with Bible verses and a text explanation of the illustration on the back




**Rom. 3:23** For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

**Rom. 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Hebrews 9:27** People are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.

**Titus 3:4-5** But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.

**Romans 5:8** But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**Ephesians 1:7** In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

**Ephesians 2:8-9** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.

**Acts 20:21** I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

**1 John 5: 11-13** And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

**Phil. 1:27** Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

**Yvon Prehn, www.Bible805.com**

**If you would like Jesus to become the Forgiver and Leader of your life, if you would like Him to be your Savior and know you are saved from the penalty of your sins, you can ask Him to do that.**
I'll explain how to do that in more detail in a minute, but before you do that, you need to carefully consider what you are doing. Becoming a Christian is not merely a fire-insurance policy to escape the possibility of hell and then where you go on living your life any way you want. When you ask Jesus to forgive your sins, you are doing business with the Creator of the universe. It is not a step to be taken lightly. The Bible says that He gave His life for you, and if you want His salvation, you must give your life back to Him.

The Bible talks about becoming Jesus' disciple and the definition of a disciple is someone who wants to become like their master. There are other lessons on Bible805.com (and in the Bible overall) that explain what it means to be a disciple, you may want to look at some of them first.

**Becoming Jesus' disciple means you are no longer in charge.**
That is what it means to truly repent of your sins (remember sin is going your own way). Now you are committed to going God's way and you'll learn more and more what that means as you go along.

As a Christian, God is now in control of your life, not you. Most of all you need to read your Bible to discover what God wants you to do and that includes going to church, praying, and being with other Christians. You are now part of the family of God and you have family responsibilities. You will learn them gradually, but you must be willing to do that. But you also have incredible joy, peace, freedom from sin, and a promised forever with Jesus.

**When you become a follower, a disciple of Jesus**
Your life will not suddenly become easy, wealthy, and trouble-free. The TV preachers or religious authors who promise this are not telling the truth.

The Bible (which is the only source of truth) tells us that Jesus promised, *"In this world, you will have troubles," but he also said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world!"*

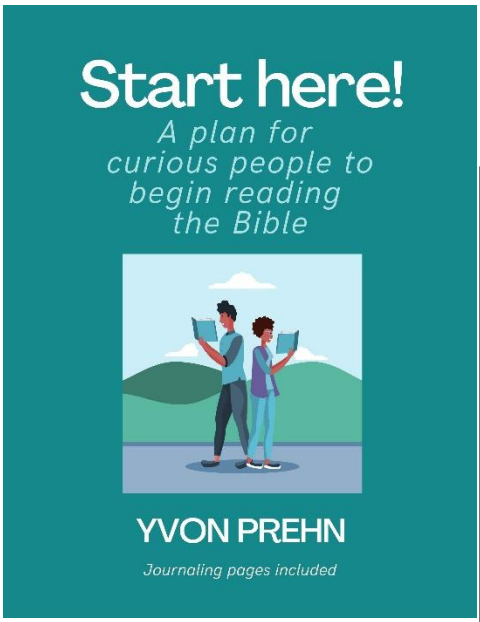
Life is seldom easy as a Christian, but as a Christian, you are now assured that your troubles have a purpose and that someday they will be over, and you are assured of heaven where there will be "no more pain, tears, or death."

**If you are ready to commit your life to Jesus, either out loud, or in your heart, you can pray something like this:**
*Dear Jesus,*
*I confess that I am a sinner and that I have chosen to live my life apart from you, to do what I wanted above all else. I don't want to do that anymore. I believe that Jesus was God and that He came to earth, died on a cross, and rose from the dead to pay the penalty for my sin, my going my own way. I am now committing my life to you and asking you to be my Forgiver and Leader. Help me to learn to pray, to read my Bible, to find a good church, and to follow through on my commitment to you by publicly acknowledging my decision in baptism. Thank you for loving me and coming into my life. Amen.*

**If you have prayed that prayer—You are saved! Welcome to the family of God!**

**Color infographic of salvation**

**Simplified infographic of salvation**




This book is a fantastic introduction to reading the Bible and has overviews and introductions to the books in the schedule, tips on what translations to use, how to journal and make the most of your reading.

## $9.99

**Available at:**

www.amazon.com
www.Bible805.com

free PDF version at—
www.Bible805academy.com

**Bible reading schedule from**
***Start here, a plan for curious people to begin reading the Bible***

**Bible Reading Plan, a brief introduction to the Bible and the Christian Life**

| Matthew | James | Acts | Romans | Philippians | John |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 ☐ | 1 ☐ | 1 ☐ | 1 ☐ | 1 ☐ | 1 ☐ |
| 2 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 2 ☐ |
| 3 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 3 ☐ |
| 4 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 4 ☐ |
| 5 ☐ | 5 ☐ | 5 ☐ | 5 ☐ | | 5 ☐ |
| 6 ☐ | | 6 ☐ | 6 ☐ | **Colossians** | 6 ☐ |
| 7 ☐ | **Luke** | 7 ☐ | 7 ☐ | 1 ☐ | 7 ☐ |
| 8 ☐ | 1 ☐ | 8 ☐ | 8 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 8 ☐ |
| 9 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 9 ☐ | 9 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 9 ☐ |
| 10 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 10 ☐ | 10 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 10 ☐ |
| 11 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 11 ☐ | 11 ☐ | | 11 ☐ |
| 12 ☐ | 5 ☐ | 12 ☐ | 12 ☐ | **1st Peter** | 12 ☐ |
| 13 ☐ | 6 ☐ | 13 ☐ | 13 ☐ | 1 ☐ | 13 ☐ |
| 14 ☐ | 7 ☐ | 14 ☐ | 14 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 14 ☐ |
| 15 ☐ | 8 ☐ | 15 ☐ | 15 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 15 ☐ |
| 16 ☐ | 9 ☐ | 16 ☐ | 16 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 16 ☐ |
| 17 ☐ | 10 ☐ | 17 ☐ | | 5 ☐ | 17 ☐ |
| 18 ☐ | 11 ☐ | 18 ☐ | **Ephesians** | | 18 ☐ |
| 19 ☐ | 12 ☐ | 19 ☐ | 1 ☐ | **2nd Peter** | 19 ☐ |
| 20 ☐ | 13 ☐ | 20 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 1 ☐ | 20 ☐ |
| 21 ☐ | 14 ☐ | 21 ☐ | 3 ☐ | 2 ☐ | 21 ☐ |
| 22 ☐ | 15 ☐ | 22 ☐ | 4 ☐ | 3 ☐ | |
| 23 ☐ | 16 ☐ | 23 ☐ | 5 ☐ | | |
| 24 ☐ | 17 ☐ | 24 ☐ | 6 ☐ | | |
| 25 ☐ | 18 ☐ | 25 ☐ | | | |
| 26 ☐ | 19 ☐ | 26 ☐ | | | |
| 27 ☐ | 20 ☐ | 27 ☐ | | | |
| 28 ☐ | 21 ☐ | 28 ☐ | | | |
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# Additional Resources from Bible805 and Yvon Prehn

## Websites

www.Bible805.com The Bible805 website is the hub of all things related to the resources and the Bible teaching ministry from Yvon Prehn. It is also where you can sign up for the ministry newsletter, download free PDFs of useful charts and Bible-teaching materials, and find links to the various Bible805 podcasts and related resources including the following sites.

www.Bible805Images.com This site has free, downloadable inspirational images and Bible quotes you can use as gifts or encouragement.

www.Bible805Academy.com This site has free, downloadable teaching materials including ad-free videos, audio files, editable questions, notes, and PowerPoint files that you can use to teach the Bible. They are truly free and available for you to use without attribution. You can modify them however you want and the only limitation is that you cannot resell them.

www.Youtube.com/Bible805 Check out the Bible805 YouTube channel! It has the video PowerPoints of Bible805 lessons, the podcasts of Bible805 teaching, and the very popular Shorts section of 60-second Bible challenges to inspire and encourage you. There is a wealth of materials here—all free for you.

In addition to these websites, the Bible805 ministry also has the following resources for you:

## Books by Yvon Prehn

These are available via links on the www.Bible805.com website, including links to free PDF versions and on www.amazon.com

## Podcasts

Bible805 podcasts are available via links on the www.Bible805.com website and through iTunes, Spotify, iHeart Radio, and all other popular podcast stations.

## Social Media

Bible805 primarily posts video excerpts to the following social media channels:
Bible805 Facebook page: www.facebook.com/bible805
Bible805 Instagram: https://www.Instagram.com/yvonbible805
Bible805 TikTok: https://www.tiktok.com/@bible805yp

**PLEASE NOTE: There is no advertising or affiliate marketing on any of the Bible805 media or the web-based sites, and the web-based materials are totally free to users.**
**Bible805 can do this because it is donor-supported and is a fiscally sponsored project of the Christian Ministry Alliance, a U.S. registered 501c3 tax-deductible charity with the Internal Revenue Service.**

**To support the ministry and continue to make these resources free, to make a donation go to www.Bible805.com and click the support tab or here:**
**https://apps.christianministryalliance.org/fs3222-bible805**

# Yvon Prehn Author Bio

Yvon Prehn, writer and teacher for Jesus, is the founder and primary content creator of Bible805, a Bible-teaching ministry.

Teaching the Bible has always been the primary passion of Yvon's life.

She started teaching the Bible as a third grader helping teach kindergarteners; in sixth grade she had her own little Sunday School class; as a sophomore in high school, she took over the youth group, and she hasn't stopped teaching Bible classes in person and online since then.

She currently has an extensive online Bible-teaching ministry that includes the Bible805 website, podcasts, a YouTube channel, books, and the online Bible805 Academy, a free resource that equips others world-wide to teach the Bible.

Yvon has a master's degree in Church History and has done additional graduate work in theology and communications.

She currently lives in incredibly beautiful Ventura, CA.

# One last question—Have you closed with Jesus?

In reading church history, I came across the question in early Puritan writings, “have you closed with Jesus?”

I think it’s a useful phrase for today because it gives us a practical description of what actually needs to happen for a person to accept the good news of Jesus, to be “saved.”

Think of it in terms of closing on a house.

You can look at a house, admire it, know all about it, walk around it.

Think that you might like to own it.

Have the ability and resources to buy it.

You can even make an offer on it.

But until you CLOSE on the house, until you exchange something of value to you, until you sign your name, and take ownership, it isn’t yours.

That’s a great illustration of what it means to accept the gift of salvation in Jesus.

You can look at Him, study all about Him; you can go to church and spend time there.

You can read a book, look at charts, infographics and verses but until you exchange your life, your will, your all to Him as much as you can, you haven’t closed with Him.

Once you have closed with Him—He is yours, salvation is yours and you have a forever home with Him.

To carry the analogy one step further, to be a responsible homeowner, you are now responsible for the maintenance of your new home.

You want to keep things in good repair; you take on the upkeep duties necessary for comfortable living.

So too, in the Christian life, you take on the duties of discipleship, time in God’s Word, time in prayer, time with other Christians and other spiritual practices to make your home with Jesus all it can be.

The closing question of this book, after you’ve read the explanations, evaluated the responsibilities, considered the cost, is:

***Have you closed with Jesus?***

Don’t put it off, do it now—make the good news of salvation your eternal possession.

# Discussion Guides for
# *The Good News of Salvation in Jesus, why you need it, how to get it*

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The following discussion guides can be used in small groups, seeker groups, any group of people who want to explore what Salvation in Jesus is all about.

They can also be used following watching the video on the Good News of Salvation in Jesus, that can be watched via YouTube or downloaded and shown for free from the www.Bible805Academy.com site.

There is no need for a formal "group leader." The purpose of the guides is to simply get people talking about or thinking about the content more deeply. One easy way to pick someone to ask the questions is to pick a person whose birthday is closest to the day you are discussing it.

The application questions can either be used to continue the discussion, or depending on time, assigned for people to do at home.

## No group?—use as a journal

If you got this book and don't have a group to discuss it with, use it as a journal.

Your understanding of the topic of salvation will deepen as you think through the answers to the questions.

## We need good news

**Section Summary**

The word gospel means “good news,” but the book asks us to consider what makes that news necessary. Our troubled world and our personal disappointments may awaken a longing for something more lasting than security, achievement, or satisfying relationships. Yet the book directs our attention beyond circumstances to our relationship with the God who created us.

Sin, as the book describes it, is not confined to a list of conspicuous offenses. At its core is the desire to go our own way rather than God’s. That inward orientation affects every person and cannot be removed simply by trying harder to behave well. The consequences are serious: separation from God in this life and, if our rejection of him continues, for eternity. Understanding this diagnosis prepares us to understand why the gospel is truly good news.

**Ice-breaker**

What do people commonly hope will give their lives lasting meaning or security?

**Opening Question**

How might the way we define the human problem shape the kind of solution we seek?

**Discussion Questions**

1. The book moves from the troubles of the world to an examination of ourselves. Why is that shift important to its argument about our need for salvation?

2. How does defining sin as choosing our own way deepen or challenge the common understanding of sin as a list of wrong actions?

3. The book suggests that even outwardly respectable lives can be lived apart from God. What does this distinction reveal about the relationship between morality and a relationship with God?

4. How does the book connect our freedom to choose our own way with the consequences of separation from God? How have you done that in your life?

5. Why would a solution based only on self-improvement fail to address the problem as the book describes it? Why do we need God's help?

**Life Applications and Thought Questions**

1. Examine an area in which a good goal or desire may have become more important to you than seeking God’s way. What specific change would express a different priority?

2. Imagine a thoughtful friend who believes being a good person is enough. How could you explain the book’s understanding of sin in a way that invites conversation rather than defensiveness?

3. Consider how the book’s account of eternal separation affects the way you view someone who does not know Jesus. What would it mean to respond with both seriousness and compassion?

**Closing Prayer**

Father, we can see the brokenness around us more easily than the ways we turn from you ourselves. Give us the honesty to examine our desires and choices in your light. Keep us from trusting our goodness as a substitute for knowing you, and help us speak about sin and its consequences with humility, compassion, and hope. Prepare our hearts to receive the good news of your love in Jesus. Amen.

## Here is where the good news starts

**Section Summary**

The book presents salvation within the whole story of the Bible. After humanity turned away, God did not abandon his creation. The Old Testament looks forward to the promised Savior and tells of God's work through Israel; the New Testament tells of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and the beginning of the church. Reading the Bible as a connected story helps us see the gospel in context.

The separation caused by sin could not be healed by human effort. Jesus lived the sinless life humanity could not live and willingly bore the penalty for sin through his death. God affirmed that sacrifice by raising him from the dead. Forgiveness is offered as a gift, not an achievement we can claim as our own. The author acknowledges that aspects of this provision are difficult to understand while emphasizing the love of Jesus and the hope of eternal life with him.

**Ice-breaker**

When has knowing the larger story changed how you understood a particular event?

**Opening Question**

Why might the claim that salvation is a gift be both reassuring and difficult to accept?

**Discussion Questions**

1. How does placing Jesus' coming within the story of the whole Bible deepen your understanding of the gospel? How can you respond to people who think he was just a random good teachere?

2. What does the book mean when it says that Jesus lived the life we could not live and died the death we could not die?

3. How are Jesus' death and resurrection the foundation to the book's explanation of the good news?

4. Why might a gift we cannot earn challenge our desire to take credit for our own accomplishments or moral standing?

5. The author acknowledges not fully understanding why Jesus' death was necessary. How can we distinguish between an honest question and a refusal to engage with what the Bible teaches?

**Life Applications and Thought Questions**

1. Explain the gospel in your own words, including humanity's need, what Jesus did, and the response his gift calls for. Where does your explanation need more clarity?

2. Choose a passage or question about Jesus' death and resurrection that you would like to investigate. Plan how you will read it in its context and discuss it with a trusted Christian.

3. Consider a person who finds the idea of grace unfair or difficult to believe. How could you listen to the concern and explain why the book calls Jesus' sacrifice an expression of love?

**Closing Prayer**

Lord Jesus, we cannot measure the cost of your love or claim credit for what you have done for us. Thank you for willingly bearing our sin and for the hope given through your resurrection. Where we have unanswered questions, help us seek understanding with humility. Where we resist receiving grace, teach us gratitude and trust. Make us faithful and thoughtful as we share your good news. Amen.

## The next move is up to us

**Section Summary**

Having explained the good news, the book considers the reader's response. Some people may reject the message; others may want to learn more; still others may be ready to receive Jesus as Forgiver and Leader. The author encourages serious seekers to ask questions and read the Bible, especially the account of Jesus, rather than treating a decision of this importance casually.

The book also explains that becoming a Christian is more than seeking protection from future judgment. Repentance involves turning from the determination to live on our own terms and committing ourselves to follow Jesus. A disciple seeks to become like the master and learns over time what it means to live under his leadership. The invitation is personal, but it carries implications for the direction of one's entire life.

**Ice-breaker**

What helps you decide whether you understand an important commitment well enough to make it?

**Opening Question**

What is the difference between agreeing that an idea is true and entrusting your life to it?

**Discussion Questions**

1. How does the book respond to people at different stages of considering the gospel? What can we learn from its invitation to keep asking questions?

2. What is the relationship between believing the good news and personally responding to Jesus as Forgiver and Leader?

3. How does the book's understanding of repentance connect a change of direction with a continuing life of discipleship?

4. Why does the author reject the idea that salvation is merely "fire insurance"? What is lost when the Christian life is presented in those terms?

5. What tensions or questions might a person experience when considering the claim that following Jesus means no longer being in charge?

**Life Applications and Thought Questions**

1. Reflect honestly on your own response to Jesus. What do you believe, what remains uncertain, and what next step would be consistent with that reflection?

2. Identify a decision or pattern in your life where you resist Jesus' leadership. What might it mean to seek his direction through the Bible, prayer, and wise Christian counsel?

3. Imagine talking with someone who is interested in Jesus but hesitant about commitment. How would you explain the invitation and its cost while respecting the person's freedom to ask questions?

**Closing Prayer**

God, thank you that you welcome those who seek and that your invitation calls for an honest response. Give us courage to face our questions and the humility to listen to your Word. Where we have clung to control, help us understand what it means to trust Jesus as Forgiver and Leader. Help us speak patiently with others as they consider his call. Amen.

## What to know before you say “Yes” to Jesus

**Section Summary**

The book asks readers to understand what follows a decision to trust Jesus. Salvation is a free gift, but it does not guarantee prosperity or a life without suffering. Jesus tells his followers that they will face trouble, while assuring them that he has overcome the world and offering the hope of a future with him.

Following Jesus is an ongoing relationship, not an isolated moment followed by an unchanged life. The book compares this commitment to marriage: prayer, learning from the Bible, and obedience belong to a life shared with him.

A Christian also becomes part of the family of God. Church participation and deeper connections in a small group offer opportunities to learn, apply the Bible, and care for others through the challenges of ordinary life.

**Ice-breaker**

What practices help a relationship endure when circumstances become difficult?

**Opening Question**

How might expectations about the Christian life influence someone’s response to suffering?

**Discussion Questions**

1. Why does the book challenge the promise that following Jesus will bring an easy or prosperous life? How does its account of hope differ from that expectation?

2. How does the marriage analogy illuminate the difference between a decision made at one moment and a relationship lived over time? Where might the analogy have limits?

3. What roles do prayer, reading the Bible, and obedience play in knowing Jesus and becoming more like him?

4. Why does the author connect personal faith with belonging to the family of God? What can be missed when church participation remains only attendance?

5. What distinguishes the kind of small group described in the book from a gathering that merely exchanges information? How can such a group help people live out what they learn?

**Life Applications and Thought Questions**

1. Examine your expectations of God during difficulty. How might the book's distinction between a trouble-free life and enduring hope reshape the way you pray or respond?

2. Make a specific plan for a sustainable practice of Bible reading and prayer. What obstacle might interrupt it, and how will you respond when it does?

3. Assess your participation in a church or Christian community. What concrete contribution could you make toward the kind of mutual care and accountability described in the book?

**Closing Prayer**

Father, thank you that your love does not depend on life being easy. When we face suffering, help us remember Jesus' promise and the hope of life with you. Teach us to know him through your Word and prayer, to follow him in our choices, and to participate faithfully in your family. Make our communities places of truth, patient love, and practical care. Amen.

## Appendix

The appendix offers practical resources for understanding the good news and sharing it with others. The salvation infographic presents the need for salvation, what Jesus has done, the response of faith, and the life that follows. Its three forms offer ways to communicate the same message in different settings. The Start Here reading schedule offers an introduction to the Bible for curious readers and new Christians. The final essay, “Have you closed with Jesus?” uses the image of closing on a house to ask whether a person has moved from learning about Jesus to responding to him and accepting the responsibilities of discipleship.

### The Salvation Infographic

1. How does the infographic connect the problem of sin, Jesus’ work, a person’s response, and the life that follows salvation? Which connections might need further explanation for someone new to the Christian faith?

2. Compare the three forms of the infographic. How might their different presentations serve readers, teachers, or conversations in different settings?

3. How could you use one form to explain salvation accurately while leaving room to listen and respond to another person’s questions?

### The Bible Reading Schedule

1. What can a guided reading schedule offer someone who is curious about Jesus or unfamiliar with the Bible? What further support might help the reader understand and apply what they read?

2. Consider an individual or group you could encourage to use the Start Here schedule. How might you introduce it, and how could you provide ongoing encouragement without making reading a task to be completed mechanically?

**Have you closed with Jesus?**

1. What distinction does the essay make between knowing about Jesus and “closing” with him? How does the house-closing illustration make that distinction memorable?

2. The essay extends the illustration to the responsibilities of maintaining a home. How does this help explain discipleship? Where might you need to clarify the analogy so someone does not confuse following Jesus with earning salvation?

3. How could you use the essay to help someone consider a personal response to Jesus? What questions would invite thoughtful reflection without assuming where the person stands?

**Closing Prayer**

Lord Jesus, thank you for the good news and for the ways your Word and these resources help us understand it. Give us wisdom to use them faithfully, care for the people with whom we share them, and patience to hear their questions. Search our own hearts as well: help us move beyond familiarity with your message to a life of trust and discipleship. Lead us to grow in your Word and to encourage others as they seek you. Amen.

## Final question—

After reading the book, looking at the infographics, discussing or journaling the answers to the questions, the most important question remains—

### *Have YOU closed with Jesus?*

Don’t close this book until you have made certain that you have made the decision to ask for forgiveness of your sins, that you have counted the cost and entrusted your eternity to Him.

Close with Jesus and not only will the meaning of GOOD NEWS and salvation in Jesus be something you learned from a book, but a reality in your life forevermore.